

# **The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (H.R. 366/S. 250)**

## **Description of Non-traditional/Special Population Provisions**

The purpose of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act is to improve the academic and career and technical skills of secondary and postsecondary education students to prepare them for high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations. The Perkins Act has made tremendous strides in increasing access to training and improving technical skills for women and men who choose to enter non-traditional fields. It has also focused on providing special populations with the career and technical skills to participate in our economy.

A non-traditional field is one in which either women or men comprise more than 75 percent of the individuals employed in such field. Special populations are those that face unique barriers to receiving an education and entering or re-entering the labor force, such as individuals with disabilities, individuals from economically disadvantaged families (including foster children), individuals preparing for non-traditional fields, single parents and single pregnant women, displaced homemakers, and individuals with limited-English proficiency.

**Non-Traditional Fields:** The Conference Report continues and expands longstanding support for access to non-traditional occupations by including participation in programs that prepare students for non-traditional fields as a performance indicator for both state and local recipients of funds. State and local programs are assessed on their performance and must publicly report this information.

**Special Populations:** The Conference Report ensures that states consult with representatives of special populations in developing their plan for the use of federal career and technical education funds; that state and local recipients develop strategies to ensure access to career and technical education for special populations; and that states and local recipients disaggregate performance data by special populations (among other categories).

**Self-Sufficiency:** The Conference Report ensures that local recipients of funds will include in their career and technical education plans strategies for helping special populations achieve self-sufficiency and use funds to implement those strategies. The Conference Report defines self-sufficiency as a standard of economic independence that takes into account demographic and geographic factors. Among such factors are family size and cost of living.